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14 July 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to DD/I (NSC)

SUBJECT: Comments re: OCB Report of 25 June 1958 on US Policy
on Antarctica (NSC 5804/1)

1. The Report fails to take note of the absence of US activities, current and future, in the Palmer Peninsula area which straddles the Drake Passage. This is particularly significant in view of the US withdrawal from the Weddell Sea area (transfer of US Ellsworth Station to Argentina, ostensibly and only nominally under a joint operation arrangement). The absence of activities in Palmer Peninsula and the withdrawal from Ellsworth is likely to weaken the US bargaining position (for exercising a concession-making influence as well as for a possible future claims action) in this entire area in dispute between Argentina, Chile, and the UK.
2. The deficiency described above is due largely to the illogical control of operational funding by Defense -- which has repeatedly disclaimed any substantive interest in the area. The Executive budgeting process fails to provide either the machinery or guidance to secure explicit Congressional budget approval in support of interests in Antarctica, which are asserted to be scientific and political. Instead, funds have to be deducted from Defense appropriations. This has two additional undesirable implications: (1) with Defense as Executive Agent the military undertaking of operations makes them most costly /e.g. the Norwegians have offered to maintain a seven-man station for weather operations for a US subvention of \$150,000/, and (2) US funding and operational execution by Defense may become increasingly embarrassing and open to Soviet propaganda attack at a time when the US is attempting to promote the concept of the use of Antarctica for peaceful purposes.
3. The above comments may be of use in the NSC Planning Board consideration of the OCB Report. It is believed that the views of the Planning Board on these problems would be of interest to the OCB representative on the Planning Board.

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DD/I Member, Working
Group on Antarctica~~SECRET~~